

THE JUDICIAL LEARNING CENTER AT THE THOMAS F. EAGLETON
UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE TO OPEN TO THE PUBLIC MAY 8th, 2006

The Judicial Learning Center, prominently situated on the main floor of the Thomas F. Eagleton United States Courthouse, was created as a nonprofit organization to inform visitors about the judicial process in the courts of the United States, and to promote public understanding about the importance of an independent judiciary and the rule of law in American society. The Center will also serve as the ideal place in which to begin organized tours for groups of students and members of community organizations visiting the courthouse.

The Judicial Learning Center has been designed to accommodate permanent exhibits, traveling exhibits, changing displays and interactive demonstrations about the role of federal courts and the operation of the justice system in the 8th Circuit. Visitors to the Center will learn not only about the three levels of federal courts, each of which is housed in the Eagleton Courthouse, but will also discover why the judicial branch was designed to be a separate but coequal branch of government.

News items about current events affecting citizens in federal court, parties pursuing justice and the public officials who perform the work of the federal courts will be highlighted in a special section of the Center space. When completed, displays around the perimeter of the Learning Center will be designed for interactive, interpretive and educational interface between the Court system and the public focusing on a variety of topics including:



An Independent Judiciary and the Rule of Law, The Difference Between State and Federal Courts, How Courts Work and Courts of the Eighth Circuit.

Until the permanent exhibits are installed, the Center will feature various traveling displays relating to themes of justice and law. The role of the United States District Courts in immigration, naturalization and deportation proceedings is the first subject investigated in the Learning Center. Nearly 2000 immigrants are sworn in as new citizens during the approximately twenty-five Naturalization Ceremonies held each year in the Eastern District of Missouri, so it is appropriate that the first traveling exhibit to be displayed at the Learning Center is provided by The American Immigration Law Foundation (AILF). The exhibit is entitled,

America’s Heritage: A History of U.S. Immigration, and was created as part of AILF’s mission to increase public understanding of U.S. immigration and the contributions of immigrants to our society.

The AILF exhibit examines 200 years of immigration to the United States touching on such topics as The Naturalization Act of 1795, The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1789, the Red Scare of the 1950s, The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act and the reforms made to immigration and immigration laws during the 1990s. This story of U.S. immigration law and policy is told through vintage photographs, accompanying text, and instructive time lines.

Above left and below are some of the images from the AILF exhibit. In the future other special exhibits will be on loan to the Judicial Learning Center from various legal agencies and organizations.

